

UNTOLD

STORY LEADS FROM MONTANA



SUMMER 2001 • visitmt.com

Where the Buffalo Roam

Large herds of buffalo, numbering as many as 20 million, once freely roamed the Great Plains. But with the rush to open the west in the mid-1800s, the buffalo soon vanished to make room for the railroad, cattle and settlers.

To the Gros Ventre and Assiniboiné people, these mighty animals provided food, clothing, tipis, tools and weapons. The buffalo was also a spiritual symbol.

Today, the buffalo is still revered by the tribes on the Fort Belknap Reservation in north-central Montana. They reintroduced the animal to their reservation in 1974.

"The reason we brought the buffalo back was for religious reasons, to get back

"...they can actually see buffalo roaming in a natural environment free of fences."

to nature, and to educate non-Indians about the ways of our people and the importance of the buffalo years ago and today," explains Darrell Martin, Tourism Specialist for Fort Belknap. Martin says the way tribal members share their knowledge and culture with non-Indians is through guided tours of their 10,000-acre buffalo reserve. "Visitors tell me that they find it hard to believe they can actually see buffalo roaming in a natural environment free of fences."

Besides buffalo, visitors may spot eagles, prairie dogs and antelopes on the sprawling prairie landscape. Tribal guides also introduce tour groups to significant cultural sites, petroglyphs and tipi rings.

The Fort Belknap buffalo tours operate May through September. For more details contact Darrell Martin at 406-353-8471



Montana's mighty buffalo.

or 406-353-8473. Other areas to view buffalo in Montana include the National Bison Range in Moiese and Yellowstone National Park.

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Say "I Do" to Montana

Millions have fallen in love with Montana's majestic mountains and wide open spaces; now it's time to fall in love under the "Big Sky."

Whether you and your partner cozy up to a crackling fire at one of our many lodges or bed and breakfasts, hike our endless mountain trails, ride horseback at an authentic guest ranch, catch a trout in one of our pristine rivers, relax in a soothing natural hot spring, dine by candlelight at our countless charming restaurants, or simply lay back and watch the stars light up our endless sky, Montana is the "Last Best Place" for love and romance.

"I have people coming from all across the country and Europe to just get married in Red Lodge," says Reverend Elaine Higgins, owner of the Canyon Wedding

Chapel. "A lot of times these folks will bring 30 or 40 guests with them so they all make a vacation out of the wedding." Higgins has been marrying couples in this mountain town, 60 miles east of Yellowstone National Park, for 25 years. She has performed weddings at her chapel, on horseback and in mountain meadows; however, she explains, "I now have an associate who handles the more rugged venues."

But it's not only Higgins who hears wedding bells; many of the town's businesses have collaborated on the "Red Lodge Is Lovely" brochure to make it easy to plan a wedding or honeymoon. Reception venues, photographers, florists, bakers, beauticians, lodging, local recreation, gifts and information about getting a marriage license are all listed in the brochure.

Say "I do" to Montana. For more information on Red Lodge call 800-823-2681 or log onto visitmt.com for other wedding/honeymoon venues.



A couple enjoys a day in Red Lodge.

A Legacy Lives On

In 1928, a young man named Bob Marshall decided to take a walk in the woods near Kalispell, Montana. Ten days and 288 miles later, he emerged at Seeley Lake. The journey had taken him through what is now the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, which encompasses a wild region of 1.5 million acres. If Bob had not died prematurely at the age of 38, he would have been 100 this year.

Bob Marshall was an author, forester and conservationist of the highest regard. Between backcountry adventures and writing books, he tirelessly campaigned for the protection of wilderness areas. By the late 1930s he had gathered enough information about the region to convince federal officials to formally dedicate and protect the area.

"The Bob," as the area is known, holds the headwaters to a number of major rivers such as the rough-and-tumble Middle Fork of the Flathead. The area contains many peaks over



9,000 feet and striking physical features such as the Chinese Wall, a 1,000-foot-high geologic thrust that resembles the Great Wall of China. The Bob is also home to a vast array of wild birds and animals including mountain goats, eagles, bears, falcons, wolverines and elk.

The Swan Ecosystem Center and the Bob Marshall Foundation are two groups in the state that are working to preserve Bob Marshall's legacy. The Foundation has developed volunteer programs that maintain trails, restore campsites and eradicate noxious weeds in this precious resource. And this summer, to commemorate Bob's 1928 walk, the two groups have joined forces to host outfitted horseback treks across this wilderness area. Money raised from the treks will be used to build public awareness about wilderness caretaking. For details call 406-754-3137. For other outfitting opportunities in the Bob Marshall Wilderness log onto visitmt.com.

The Stage is Set

The sparkling Sapphire Mountains serve as the natural backdrop for the southwest Montana town of Philipsburg. But this is not the only beautiful backdrop in the area.

Inside the town's historic Opera House Theatre, five original hand-painted scenic backdrops hang gracefully on the stage. Painted by artist Edgar S. Paxson in the late 1800s and early 1900s, these artistic marvels stand 16 feet high and are 22 feet wide. The backdrops, which are on loan from the Granite County Museum, are used today in many of the theatre's live productions. "People come in here and see these incredible pieces of beauty on the stage and they are in awe," says Claudette Dringie, whose husband Tim bought the rundown structure 16 years ago and began to renovate it. The scenes include "The Garden," "Dark Woods," "Light Woods," "Sky" and "Palace."

The Opera House Theatre was established in 1891 and has the distinction of being Montana's oldest continually operating theatre. Through the years the 350-seat auditorium



photo Mike Byrnes

Scenic backdrops by Edgar S. Paxson in Phillipsburg.

hosted famous acting troupes, minstrel shows, dog and pony acts, magicians and dancers. "Many of the entertainers who worked here left their mark by autographing the walls. We don't want to lose that history so we just paint around them," says Claudette. The theatre's original wooden seats, balcony, orchestra pit and trap door on center stage are still intact.

This summer the Opera House Theatre Company will perform two productions, "Buffalo Bill" and "Dracula." The shows will run July 5 through September 2. For more information on the Opera House call 406-859-0013.

Book Mark September 7 & 8, 2001

It's true that Montana's landscape is rich in natural beauty, pristine rivers, wide open prairies and jagged mountains, but did you know that Montana has a rich literary landscape?

Authors such as Norman MacLean, Ivan Doig, James Welch and Mary Clearman Blew all have a strong connection with Montana.

To celebrate the state's written word, the Montana Committee for the Humanities and the Montana Center for the Book are sponsoring the Montana Festival of the Book in Missoula, September 7-8, 2001. The two-day event will feature 70 of the region's writers in a variety of readings, panels, exhibits, demonstrations and entertainment. The majority of the events are free and open to the public.

According to Festival Coordinator Kim Anderson, last year's inaugural event attracted



over 4,000 visitors, making it the state's largest literary function. Anderson says a region's literature is a great introduction to the attractions that a region holds. "Why not attend readings and panels featuring some of the nation's finest envi-

ronmental writers and then hike into the Bob Marshall Wilderness? Or listen to Pulitzer Prize-winner Annie Proulx read from her new introduction to 'A River Runs Through It' before exploring the Blackfoot River itself?"

Anderson says many of the readings, panels and workshops are family-friendly. Bookmaking, papermaking, kids writing workshops and a return of the Harry Potter Readers Theater Players are all planned.

Why not check out the Montana Festival of the Book. For more information contact Kim Anderson at kanders@selway.umt.edu or log on to www.bookfest-mt.org.

Here's the Scoop

These days it's hard to find anything authentic. With all of the same fast food chains and large discount mega stores lining our roads, you may never know what city you're visiting. However, when it comes to authentic in Montana we have a sweet surprise. Fifteen old-fashioned soda fountains have a seat waiting for you at their counters.



The Soda Fountain at Jordan Drug.

If you happen to be traveling on Montana Highway 200 in the eastern part of the state through Jordan, you may want to drop in at Foster Jordan Drug. Karen and John Fitzgerald have owned the store since 1969; their soda fountain dates back to 1937. According to Karen they don't advertise the fountain; the majority of the folks who come in for a soda are local and those who are not from this area hear about it when they are fueling up at the gas station. "But we do have groups of hunters who come back year after year and can't wait to have their chocolate shake." The Fitzgeralds say everyone who stops in says they're crazy about the fountain, but from a business perspective soda fountains aren't that realistic. "They take up a lot of room, they don't make you any money, they take a lot of work, but we don't care. They sure are special."

And once you slurp up your soda in Jordan, you only have to travel 60 miles to the east to the town of Circle, where the folks at Chapin's Drug will be happy to mix you your favorite ice cream treat. Other soda fountains on your sweet Montana journey include The Bon Ton in Lewistown, Cole Drug in Big Timber, Eagle Store in West Yellowstone, Norm's News in Kalispell, Olson's Drug in Conrad, Snyder's Drug and Soda Fountain in Great Falls, Stage Station in Seeley Lake, Superior Drug Store in Superior, The Parrot Confectionery in Helena, Three Forks Candy Company in Three Forks, Yesterday's Soda Fountain and Restaurant in Ennis and Eagle Drug in West Yellowstone.

JUNE

- 1-2 **Frontier Days**—Culbertson 787-5821
- 1-3 **Bigfork Whitewater Festival**—
Bigfork 837-5888
- 2 **Country Fair at the Moss
Mansion**—Billings 256-5100
- 2 **Governor's Cup (road race)**—
Helena 447-3414
- 2 **Richey Vintage Car Show**—
Richey 773-5840
- 2-3 **Antiques Roundup Show and
Sale**—Roundup 323-3544 or 861-5855
- 2-3 **Missouri River Breaks Lewis &
Clark Encampment**—Malta 673-3559
- 8-10 **Hot Springs 52nd Homesteader
Days Celebration**—Hot Springs
741-2361
- 8-10 **Montana Mule Days**—Drummond
777-5988 or 777-2331
- 9 **Buzzard Day**—Glendive 365-6256
- 9 **Gold Rush Fever Day**—
Virginia City 843-5555
- 9-10 **Pioneer Power Day Threshing
Bee**—Lewistown 538-5236
- 9-10 **Rock Creek Walleye Tournament
on Fort Peck**—Glasgow 653-1952
- 9-17 **Red Lodge Music Festival**—Red Lodge
446-1905
- 14-17 **Fort Union Rendezvous**—Sidney
701-572-9083
- 14-17 **Red Bottom Celebration**—Frazer
768-5155 ext. 338 or 695-2272
- 15-17 **Matthew Quigley Buffalo Rifle
Match**—Forsyth 356-7746
- 15-17 **Montana Reenactment 2001**—
Pompeys Pillar 585-8459 or 580-2200
- 15-17 **Sleeping Giant Swing'n Jazz
Jubilee**—Helena 227-9711 or 227-6961
- 16 **Florence Renaissance Faire**—Florence
273-0709
- 16 **Heritage Day**—Sidney 482-1916
- 16 **Powell County Territorial Day**—
Deer Lodge 846-2094
- 17 **49th Roy Rodeo**—Roy 464-2296
- 20-21 **1876 Grand Ball**—Hardin 665-2559
- 20-24 **Little Bighorn Days**—Hardin 665-1672
- 20-24 **Lewis & Clark Festival: "Unexpected
Discoveries"**—Great Falls 452-5661
- 22-24 **125th Anniversary of the Custer
Battle at Little Big Horn**—Garryowen
638-1876 or 638-2000
- 22-24 **Custer's Last Stand Reenactment**—
Hardin 665-3577 or 665-1672
- 23 **Longest Dam Run**—Glasgow 228-2222
- 24 **Augusta American Legion Rodeo
and Parade**—Augusta 562-3477
- 28-7/1 **Montana Traditional Dixieland
Jazz Festival**—Missoula 771-1642
- 29-7/1 **Fort Benton Summer
Celebration**—Fort Benton 622-3351
- 30 **Whitefish Lake Run**—Whitefish 862-3501
- 30-7/1 **Pioneer Days and Antique
Show**—Scooby 487-5965 or 487-2061

JULY

*For a list of all of Montana's rodeos, pow wows,
fairs and events, log on to visitmt.com*

- 6-8 **Outlaw Days**—Malta 654-1776
- 6-8 **Rock'n Roll Daze**—Missoula 251-6617
- 7-8 **Annual Arts Festival**—Whitefish 863-9887
- 12-14 **Montana Governor's Cup Walleye
Tournament**—Glasgow 228-2222
- 12-15 **North American Indian
Days**—Browning 338-7276
- 13 **River's Edge Trail Luminaria
Walk**—Great Falls 761-4966
- 13-14 **Marcus Daly Days**—Hamilton 363-5480
- 13-15 **78th Annual Wolf Point Wild
Horse Stampede**—Wolf Point 653-2220
- 13-15 **Bitterroot Valley Bluegrass
Festival**—Hamilton 363-4444
- 13-15 **Western Heritage Days**—Deer Lodge
846-2070 or 846-3388
- 17-26 **Clark Bottom Rendezvous**—Laurel
633-2497
- 19-22 **Fairview Old Timers Reunion and
Summer Festival**—Fairview 744-5189
- 19-22 **Seventh Annual Big Skyfest**—Billings
255-0466 or 252-9355
- 20-21 **Montana State Old Time Fiddlers
Contest**—Polson 323-1198
- 20-22 **Big Sky State Games**—Billings 254-7426
- 20-22 **Standing Arrow Pow Wow**—Elmo
849-5798
- 21 **"A Walk in the Woods" Quilt Show
& Sale**—Seeley Lake 677-3109 or 677-3409
- 21 **Railroad Days**—Alberton 722-4570
- 21-22 **Bannack Days**—Bannack 834-3413
- 21-22 **Canyon Ferry Walleye Festival**—
Townsend 266-5279
- 21-29 **Wild West Heritage Week**—Virginia City
and Ennis 843-5364 or 843-5555
- 21-30 **Skydive Lost Prairie 34th Annual
Jump Meet**—KalisPELL 858-2493
- 25-27 **Central Montana Horse Show,
Fair and Rodeo**—Lewistown 538-8841
- 25-30 **International Traditional
Games**—Evaro 675-0160
- 26-29 **Lewis & Clark Festival**—Cut Bank
873-4041 or 873-2213
- 26-30 **Milk River Indian Days**—Fort Belknap
353-2901
- 27-29 **Butte Jazz Festival**—Butte 782-2069
- 27-29 **Hockaday Museum of the Arts in
the Park**—KalisPELL 755-5268
- 27-8/5 **Red Lodge Mountain Man
Rendezvous**—Red Lodge 446-1718
- 28-29 **Clark Day**—Billings 896-5235
- 28-8/4 **Montana State Fair**—Great Falls 727-8900
- 29-8/1 **Northeast Montana Fair**—Glasgow
228-8221

AUGUST

- 1-4 **Park County Fair**—Livingston 222-4185
- 1-5 **Pioneer Days and Lake County
Fair**—Ronan 676-8300
- 3-5 **Huckleberry Days**—Whitefish 862-3501
- 3-5 **Rocky Mountain Accordion
Celebration**—Philipsburg 859-3388

- 3-5 **The Virginia City Gathering**—
Virginia City 843-5455
- 3-12 **Festival of Nations**—Red Lodge 446-1718
- 4 **Annual Montana Power Summer
Symphony**—Helena 497-2841
- 4 **Chief Plenty Coups Day of
Honor**—Pryor 252-1289
- 4-5 **Annual Festival of the Arts**—Bigfork
881-4636 or 837-5888
- 7-12 **Western Montana Fair and
Rodeo**—Missoula 721-3247
- 9-11 **International Fly Fishing
Show**—Livingston 585-7592
- 10-12 **22nd Huckleberry Festival**—
Trout Creek 827-4091 or 827-3421
- 11 **123rd Commemoration of the Battle
of the Big Hole**—Wisdom 689-3155
- 11 **High Plains Classic Car Show**—Miles
City 232-3288 or 232-4479
- 11-18 **Montana Fair, Metrapark**—Billings
256-2400 or 256-2422
- 13-19 **Burnt Hole Rendezvous/Historical
Reenactment**—West Yellowstone 646-7110
- 16-19 **Montana Cowboy Poetry
Gathering**—Lewistown 538-8278
- 16-19 **Western Rendezvous of Art**—
Helena 442-4263 or 442-3256
- 16-20 **Crow Fair and Rodeo**—Crow Agency
638-2601 ext. 104 or 222
- 18 **Madison Valley Arts Festival**—Ennis
685-3481
- 18-19 **Threshing Bee**—Huntley 967-6687
- 24-26 **Barnes Steam and Power
Show**—Belgrade 388-4433
- 25 **9th Annual Quilting in the Country
Outdoor Quilt Show**—Bozeman 587-8216
- 25 **Chinook West Fest**—Chinook 357-2224
- 25-26 **Montana Walleye Unlimited Fall
Classic**—Lewistown 464-5491
- 25-26 **Victorian Weekend & Heritage
Days**—Virginia City 843-5300 or 843-5555
- 26 **Mining Heritage Days**—Butte 723-7211
- 31-9/3 **Milk River Wagon Train**—Malta
654-1100 or 654-2783

FROM MONTANA

The diversity of events, places and people in Montana is almost as wide as the state itself. We hope to give you a taste of that diversity with this quarterly newsletter. In addition, my office offers these services to editors, writers and producers.

Visual Materials

Color slides, 8"x 10" B/W photos and stock video footage are available for editorial use.

Writer/Photographer Referrals

We can put you in contact with many of Montana's most talented and experienced freelance writers and photographers.

Editorial Copy/Calendar of Events

We can provide background information or editorial copy for many subjects. We also maintain a calendar of events for the entire state.

Individual Attention

If you need the latest vacation guide and road map of Montana, a liaison with other government agencies or detailed information to fit a specific story angle, we're here to assist you.

Mary Boyle, Publicity Coordinator